UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1994/SR.12
27 July 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session for 1994

High-level segment

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 28 June 1994, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. BUTLER	(Australia)
later:	Mr. BOTEZ (Vice-President)	(Romania)
later:	Mr. BUTLER (President)	(Australia)

CONTENTS

AN AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AN AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Mr. LOEIS (Indonesia) said that, since the end of the cold war, issues of peace, security and development were increasingly recognized as indivisible. At the same time, the concept of development itself was evolving and there was increasing recognition that development must be human-centred and must be expanded to include political, social, economic, humanitarian and environmental dimensions. The changing global configuration had given the international community an opportunity to refocus its attention on stimulating economic growth and development and on eradicating poverty. Greater interdependence and integration together with rapid advances in technology, especially in the fields of communication, informatics and transportation, had made the need for an agenda for development more compelling than ever.

Despite the crucial need for a new global development policy, the United Nations had become disproportionately preoccupied with world security and humanitarian issues at the expense of development. The deliberations on an agenda for development were thus most timely.

In formulating such an agenda, however, the concept of development should be clearly defined. While there was no single definitive model of development that could be universally applied and accepted, there must be dominant models, such as an economic-growth model focusing on the market-oriented approach and a human-centred model which sought to improve the human condition by eradicating poverty, developing human resources, and satisfying the basic needs of all people on a sustainable basis. Because economic growth was the mainspring of development, efforts to achieve and accelerate sustained economic growth were essential for expanding the resource base of developing countries. In that connection, the agenda for development should build upon the older and well-tested core issues of development, such as international trade, finance and technology, while at the same time incorporating newer dimensions, such as environmental and social concerns together with democratization and population issues. Adequate trade, financial and technological regimes were critical to

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

development. International trade, for example, provided a sustained and essential means of earning crucial foreign exchange. In that context, the recently concluded Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations should ensure the continued liberalization of global trade and contribute to the promotion of an open, rural-based, non-discriminatory and predictable trading system.

The experience of Indonesia had been that stability was essential to, as well as dependent upon, development. In Indonesia, the five dimensions of development identified by the Secretary-General in his agenda for development, namely, peace, economic growth, environment, social justice and democracy, were subsumed under what was known as the "trilogy of development", i.e. growth, equity and stability. Economic growth was one of the most effective ways of alleviating poverty and ensuring equity, which was seen not only as the equitable participation in development and its fruits but also as a sustainable balance between people and their environment. Growth and equity were the foundations of stability.

While the proposed agenda for development should be a continuing global process which sought to forge an international consensus on development, it should not be seen as a substitute for the agreements and instruments already in place. Rather, it should incorporate existing agreements and instruments while identifying the reasons why many of them had not been fully implemented.

The United Nations, as the only democratic and universal organization with the capacity to respond globally to economic and humanitarian issues, was uniquely positioned to launch the agenda for development. There was, however, a need to bring the Bretton Woods institutions closer to the United Nations. In that connection, the current policy dialogue with the heads of the various multilateral, financial and trade institutions of the United Nations was a step in the right direction and should become institutionalized.

Mr. AINSCOW (United Kingdom) said that the agenda for development provided a framework for a future approach to development that was both realistic and honest. It stressed the central role of economic growth as the engine of development while cautioning that it must be pursued in the context of sustainable human development. It made clear that appropriate and pragmatic national policies provided the critical foundation for growth and that without them no amount of international support would work. Most importantly, it

(Mr. Ainscow, United Kingdom)

recognized the fundamental link between development and democracy and the fact that development was a much broader concept than economic growth. Previous attempts within the United Nations system to promote those concepts had not been very successful. His delegation therefore welcomed the commitment contained in the agenda for development to pursue strategies that would help achieve development goals.

The United Kingdom did not agree with everything in the agenda; the latter had not effectively addressed the role of the Bretton Woods institutions and had understated the major contribution which those institutions were currently making to development. It also had doubts about some of the ideas on how to promote international cooperation, such as the proposal for a formal mechanism of contact between the Group of Seven and the Group of Fifteen, and noted the absence of any reference to the problem of drugs. Nevertheless, the agenda struck the right balance overall and provided an excellent basis for future work. The Economic and Social Council should now offer guidance to the Secretary-General on how the principles and themes contained in the agenda could be translated into concrete actions. Many of the building blocks for an enabling environment for development already existed and covered key issues, such as people-centred development, democracy and human rights, good government, the need for sound economic policies and a strong private sector, and the promotion of a supportive international economic environment.

Using that framework, the Council should now start the process of developing a menu of actions at both the national and international levels which could be adapted to the widely differing circumstances and needs of individual countries. Such a menu could be based on the five main principles contained in the agenda for development. National measures could include the need to promote equality of opportunity for all members of society and more specific issues, such as ways of creating the right economic environment. Actions by the international community could include the promotion of a freer trading environment, debt relief initiatives and more effective donor coordination aimed at maximizing the value of existing aid resources.

The other crucial task was to address the role of the United Nations system in development. While in some areas, such as exploiting the links between peace and development, its unique role was not questioned, in other areas, such as its claim to special expertise, the case for its comparative advantage was less

(Mr. Ainscow, United Kingdom)

obvious and must be demonstrated. The United Nations, like other institutions, must earn its right to be regarded as a principal channel of development assistance. Reform must continue if the United Nations was to play the sort of role in development envisaged by the agenda. One of the most potent instruments for such reform was General Assembly resolution 47/199. Indeed, most of the necessary instruments for reform were already in place and the challenge was now to ensure that they were used effectively.

Mr. KHURSHEED (India) said that the need for an agenda for development had never been greater, given recent attempts to sideline development and treat it merely as a component of or adjunct to peacemaking and conflict resolution. It was essential to rectify the erosion of the Organization's development cooperation mission in the areas of policy-making, coordination, implementation, monitoring and execution.

An agenda for development must comprehensively address the widespread, absolute poverty which hampered the efforts of developing countries to achieve accelerated economic growth and sustainable development and to contribute to global prosperity. Rather than redefine or renegotiate the consensus regarding or policy frameworks for various aspects of development which already existed or which would emerge from the United Nations Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development, the agenda should seek to enable the United Nations to monitor their implementation and identify any obstacles thereto. The United Nations should coordinate policy and action where required and execute programmes where called upon to do so. It must evolve a cooperative relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions.

The most vital aspect of an agenda for development must be a new synergistic partnership for development between developed and developing countries. That required a creative blending of free-market policies and governmental action at the national and international levels, a commitment by the developed countries to complement the efforts of the developing countries to integrate themselves in the global economy by jointly and democratically establishing fair rules and following those rules themselves. Developing countries which continued to have special needs would require preferential treatment, and the developing countries must be associated with the evolution and coordination of macroeconomic policies, in particular those which had an impact on monetary and financial issues.

(Mr. Khursheed, India)

His delegation did not question the fact that economic growth and development required supportive social and political structures, peace and stability and distributive justice. However, socio-political issues must not be central to an agenda for development nor should they become grounds for conditionality. His delegation envisaged a concrete, action-oriented agenda for development that clearly defined the strategies, parameters and mechanisms required to redress inequities in the international economic system. Accelerated economic growth and sustained development must not be sacrificed in the name of sustainable development.

His delegation hoped that, given the wealth of material now available on the subject, the Secretary-General would provide a further report on an agenda for development in time for the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The agenda should include an analysis of post-cold war international economic negotiations since 1989, concrete ways and means to tackle the obstacles to development facing developing countries, an action plan for a partnership for development and methods to enable the relevant United Nations bodies and the Bretton Woods institutions to act in concert for the implementation of the new agenda.

Mr. KASTRUP (Germany) said that the agenda for development was the necessary complement to the agenda for peace, since peace could only be maintained if the root causes of conflict were addressed. But peace alone was no guarantee of development. Countries must assume responsibility for their own development and for the promotion of respect for human rights, justice and fundamental freedoms. Those countries which did not fulfil that responsibility were destroying the foundations of development.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had imprinted on the conscience of all nations the need to change old attitudes and to ensure sustainable development. A global partnership to protect the environment and to sustain development would increasingly become the peace policy of the future.

Germany's objectives in the field of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation were primarily to combat poverty, promote the integration of developing countries into the world economy and to develop and strengthen democratic structures based on the rule of law. The European Union, for its part, had introduced guidelines for development cooperation aimed at ensuring greater consideration for the interdependence of human beings, democracy and

(Mr. Kastrup, Germany)

development. The operational activities for development within the United Nations system must be made more efficient and better coordinated than in the past. The coordinating role of UNDP, for example, should be strengthened by expanding the system of resident coordinator. It was also necessary to work out cooperation agreements with the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions in order to make optimum use of the attributes of each side. He noted that the Commission on Sustainable Development was seeking to become the main political driving force for the new global partnership for the environment and development between North and South.

The agenda for development must serve as an instrument for eliminating poverty, disease, oppression and war and for promoting sustainable development and meeting the needs of the people, particularly those in the poorest countries. Development was a fundamental human right, and peace, democracy and justice constituted the foundation for its achievement.

Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland) said that his delegation was gratified that the report of the Secretary-General gave special attention to the close links between development and human rights. People were gradually coming round to the idea that democratic political systems could give an important stimulus to the development process. Poland's own experience over the past five years proved that bringing down political barriers and establishing institutions that enabled people to participate in decision-making could be instrumental in promoting development. The report rightly drew attention to the problems of the revival of xenophobia, as well as ultranationalistic and anti-democratic forces; it also referred to the need for a better appreciation of the importance of the various actors in the development process, including political parties, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and grass-roots organizations. The agenda for development could initiate the process of regular evaluation of the activities of those bodies and their interaction with the United Nations. Poland also supported the suggestion that the United Nations should assist grass-roots organizations.

New realities and the increasing interdependence in international relations required new approaches to cooperation. It was imperative to establish a partnership for development, in order to create a climate of genuine cooperation and international solidarity and inspire a new pattern of economic relations

(Mr. Mroziewicz, Poland)

between countries based on the recognition of sovereign equality, mutual interests and shared responsibility.

Democratic transformations initiated in Central Europe had brought about a global change; the reintegration of previously divided parts of the world into a single interdependent organism was one of the greatest challenges of the 1990s. That concept was not adequately reflected in the agenda as a whole. The challenge of transition should be an important chapter of the agenda. The economic transformation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had also shown that there was no viable alternative to the market economy; that basic point was not properly reflected in the agenda.

The current climate was conducive to enhancing the role of the United Nations in development. The "spirit of Rio" had made it possible to start building an international consensus around sustainable development. The role of the agenda would be to enrich that concept with a human dimension. The five global conferences envisaged by the United Nations in the 1990s could be instrumental in that respect. The agenda should synthesize the results of those conferences, indicating areas or problems which had not been given adequate attention. The United Nations needed to strengthen its role in the economic, social and related fields. Particular attention should be focused on the interactions between the Bretten Woods institutions and the United Nations and on how those institutions could cooperate more closely with other United Nations agencies in their respective areas and on the basis of comparative advantage.

The agenda for development and an agenda for human rights as proposed by his delegation could constitute the two major pillars of future cooperation in the Council.

Mr. NAKAJIMA (Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO)) said that, as part of the United Nations system, WHO was committed to the development of nations and to the health of their peoples. WHO believed that Governments had a responsibility for the health of their peoples and that the only way to fulfil that responsibility was by ensuring adequate health and social standards. Governments, however, could not accomplish that on their own and WHO had therefore begun to update its health-for-all strategies with a view to more effectively promoting universal access to health care through the active involvement of the community. WHO actively participated in the development dialogue with other United Nations organizations, including the Bretton Woods

(Mr. Nakajima, WHO)

institutions, in order to ensure greater consistency and efficiency in programmes and in the use of resources. In that context, it had restructured the immunization programmes of WHO and was pursuing a dialogue with its partners in the United Nations system with a view to establishing a co-sponsored programme.

WHO focused attention on countries and population groups which were particularly vulnerable and which had limited access to health services. It recognized the link between health and economic development and helped countries to identify those interventions that would meet vital health needs and alleviate poverty. It was especially concerned with sub-Saharan Africa where the threat of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria had become not only a health problem but also a social, economic and political issue.

In order to ensure a standard of health which permitted all human beings to live socially and economically productive lives, both development and democracy were essential. Indeed, the Secretary-General rightly equated democracy with good governance. From the point of view of health, that meant that available resources must be devoted to building up the basic infrastructure of primary health care. The well-being of the environment was intimately linked with that of human beings. It was not only pollution that damaged human health. Wasted natural resources, chemical and nuclear hazards, civil strife and other human factors, including uncoordinated decision-making, all deprived people of the opportunity to lead healthy and productive lives. Development would not be possible unless the health of all human beings was assured through appropriate policies and action. The world community must therefore focus its attention on development as a people-oriented, participatory effort, in which economic growth led to sustainable human well-being, including health security, for all.

Mr. MOHAMMED (Ethiopia) welcomed the proposed agenda for development, noting that the plight of Africa was worsening daily. While Ethiopia shared the view that each country was responsible for its own development, that did not negate the value of the commitment, especially in the form of official development assistance, made by global partners. Current policy initiatives and market reforms in Africa must be set in the context of growth and development; the issue of the access of African products to international markets was of particular importance. It was common knowledge that African products were currently subject to both tariff and non-tariff barriers; the United Nations

(Mr. Mohammed, Ethiopia)

should initiate discussions with the international partners of Africa and the relevant institutions for the swift removal of those barriers.

Within the context of the United Nations role in development, human resource development and institution-building were the cornerstone of the technical assistance provided to Ethiopia. Indeed, the agenda for peace and the agenda for development were at the heart of the development programme of the Government of that country. The universality of the United Nations system and the mandate given by its Charter were excellent beginnings. However, more results were now needed and the United Nations system must be strengthened to enable it to provide assistance more efficiently and on a larger scale.

Mr. MAYOR (Director-General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the agenda for development must lead to concerted and effective action by the international community to end the scandal of the current social inequalities. Such an agenda needed to place the greatest emphasis on the generation and transfer of knowledge, the promotion of human development and endogenous capacity-building through lifelong, intensive and diversified education. Education - accessible to all members of society, including girls and women, employing all the resources of modern technology, varied in its forms and methods in order to respond to diverse social needs and provide opportunities for the continuous upgrading and extension of knowledge was the key to realizing the unique potential of each individual and tackling the problem of underdevelopment at its source. It was also a crucial factor in mastering runaway population growth, fostering environmental protection and promoting attitudes of tolerance and mutual understanding conducive to democracy and peace within and between nations. Such an education must be at the heart of any agenda for development.

Peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance were overshadowing the central purpose of the United Nations. Innovative ways must be found of achieving a better balance between peace-keeping and peace building, including the adaptation of military capacity, the empowerment of civil society and the reduction of the current asymmetries. In a world used to responding to what was appealing to the eye and the emotions, there was a need to promote a greater awareness of the importance of intangibles such as peace building.

(Mr. Mayor, UNESCO)

No economic growth was possible without human resources, without human empowerment through knowledge and skill acquisition. Investment in education at all levels was vital in order to nourish the roots of development.

Concrete measures to achieve economic and social development were needed. What finally mattered were the priorities established at the national level, the percentage of GNP devoted to education and scientific and technical development, and national agreement on essential policies for sustainable development.

Practical as well as moral considerations urged the need for the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. In a world in which global media coverage made everyone a witness, human solidarity was increasingly a political necessity. Education was crucial to managing interdependence and nurturing a world-wide culture of development and a global culture of peace.

Mr. GORITA (Romania) referring to the idea that development was the shared responsibility of all countries, said that the prospects for balanced and sustained global development in the future should be based on correct assessment of the specific problems of individual countries. Furthermore good governance and the encouragement of private initiative were prerequisites for the enhancement of national efforts to promote development. Good governance required political will conducive to change and development, internal social and political stability, and adequate policies and strategies to ensure the efficient use of existing human and material resources and to maintain a balance between short-, medium- and long-term options. That in turn required the support of a favourable international environment which fully recognized the interdependence of development and peace.

The agenda for development should pay special attention to the close interrelationship between environment and development at the global and national levels. Environmental considerations must be incorporated during the initial stages of any economic reform or structural adjustment process. He underscored the important role of democracy and respect for human rights in achieving sustained growth and sustainable development. Governments no longer should act as the main agents of economic growth, but rather, should provide a supportive institutional and legal framework for private initiatives.

Mr. de MARIA y CAMPOS (Director-General, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that everyone would agree that peace must be at the top of the agenda for development as a basic condition of

(Mr. de Maria y Campos, UNIDO)

development. One particular dimension of development was both a consequence and precursor of peace, namely, socio-economic development. The 1990s had seen the beginning of a period of extraordinary global change. However, most developing countries, particularly the least developed countries of Africa and the poorer population segments of other developing countries, were unable to take advantage of the new opportunities for growth. Foreign direct investment had largely been confined to a few countries. For the rest, which were also facing rapid population growth and massive unemployment, the impact of change could translate into accentuated disparities and social conflicts. Just as lack of peace endangered socio-economic progress, lack of socio-economic progress could endanger peace and lead to the need for even more costly peace-keeping operations.

The challenge was to harness the opportunities and build up resilient economic growth patterns. In recent years, the United Nations had had to focus on one issue after another, overshadowing long-term fundamental concerns that were at the root of development in national economies.

Industrialization was the main driving force of socio-economic development. Blind faith in its rewards, as well as the excesses of import substitution, had led to a period of disenchantment with the role of industrialization in development. In recent years it had become evident that industry was the key activity that added value to human and natural resources and provided for the efficient and effective satisfaction of human needs. However, industrialization did not happen automatically; while private sector development had an essential role to play, a more pro-active role had to be played by the public sector, especially at the earlier stages of industrial development or restructuring. The United Nations system must support both the public and private sectors. The developing world and the countries in transition needed to follow an industrial development pattern that from the outset was directed to equitable and environmentally sustainable development, rather than growth with built-in conflicts and disparities.

New global partnerships were required between all the agents of growth in the international community, in contrast to traditional fragmented technical assistance. The complexity of the development process, and its interrelated social, political, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions, had to be recognized. A new ethic of national and international industrial development

(Mr. de Maria y Campos, UNIDO)

and global industrial partnership was needed, in which public and private entities, with the support of the United Nations system, synchronized their efforts.

Recent experience showed that macroeconomic stability was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for socio-economic development and that globalization was often accompanied by disintegration within national borders. Macroeconomic adjustments required the incorporation of the sectoral and social dimension. In that context, the United Nations needed to shift its attention to fundamental issues; redefine its role in regard to global, regional, national and subnational issues; search for its added value in the solution of problems; and restructure its organizational setting and give proper attention and resources to specialized agencies. Global issues and global institutions needed to be operationalized. Deliberate and specific actions had to be taken which required expertise that only the specialized agencies could provide.

Restructuring needed to be pursued within the United Nations to ensure that programmes had greater impact and sharper focus. To that end, the tasks of the United Nations system must be properly reviewed and the work reassigned among its various agencies. At the same time, a fundamental restructuring of the organizations was necessary, and an overhaul of management rules and procedures so that they could respond effectively to demands for their services.

UNIDO had recently completed its own far-reaching process of reform and organizational restructuring, with the support of Member States. However, its programmes could achieve the desired impact only when they formed an integral part of the overall international and national development efforts; when UNIDO could further build up its country presence, in coordination with other United Nations organizations; when the division of labour between the specialized agencies was clear-cut, avoiding duplication; when the various restructuring efforts of the United Nations system took account of the comparative advantages of each agency; and when UNDP and the Bretton Woods institutions relied on the expertise of the specialized agencies which had a comparative advantage.

Mr. CAVALCANTI (Brazil) said that the end of the cold war had greatly increased the possibilities for cooperation. The increasing interdependence of the world economy demanded strengthened cooperation because no country or group of countries could expect to have complete control over economic variables. Instead of equating cooperation with aid or assistance, efforts must be made to

(Mr. Cavalcanti, Brazil)

rise above the donor-recipient paradigm to a partnership model of mutual efforts for mutual gain. Five concrete themes must be addressed under an agenda for development.

The first was the need to build upon the trade liberalization efforts of the past decade through enhanced efforts to curb restrictions. By creating the conditions for an expansion of world trade, a strong stimulus would be given to growth, the necessary prerequisite of development. The efforts undertaken by most Latin American economies over the past decade had not been matched by comparable efforts on the part of industrialized countries.

Second, an agenda for development should seek to support an economic regionalism that fostered greater integration at the regional level as a mechanism for enhanced international integration, not as a barrier to interregional trade. Latin American regional experiences exhibited that healthy trend towards an "open regionalism".

Third, renewed emphasis must be given to economic multilateralism, which had advanced so much during the Uruguay Round. The new World Trade Organization had inherited a legacy which reflected the key issues of international trade, though emerging interrelationships, such as those between trade and the environment or labour policies, should not be construed as new modalities of protectionism.

A fourth area was that of international financial flows, both official and private nature, which had become increasingly important in the promotion of development. Appropriate measures must be sought to increase productive private investment and official development assistance, particularly for the least developed countries.

Fifth, an agenda for development must recognize the critical role played by technology in development efforts as well as the need to promote multilateral action aimed at enhancing technology transfers. Notwithstanding the important role of the private sector, intergovernmental action could be instrumental in stimulating technology transfer, much as national measures could assist in the internal research and development of technologies.

Through a combination of measures in those five priority areas, a system of international cooperation for development could be structured so that the interests of all the parties concerned could be fully taken into account. Development must be sustained, sustainable, general and equitable. Policy

(Mr. Cavalcanti, Brazil)

coordination between the United Nations economic bodies and the Bretton Woods institutions and greater participation of developing nations in the decision-making process of those institutions were of particular importance.

In order to promote genuine cooperation, mechanisms must be developed which equitably took into account the diverse interests at stake. While the United Nations was built upon more democratic principles, it was held back by the lack of concrete instruments with which to take action. The Bretton Woods institutions had authority, but their decision-making procedures would benefit from more effective participation of developing countries. The current decision-making procedure had led to an erosion of the capacity of institutions to address the major macroeconomic imbalances in the world economy. Thus institutions essentially acted as monitors of the developing countries' economic policies and as lenders in areas deemed to be of global impact, such as the environment, whereas in fact the need was for a more nuanced and objective-oriented action.

The existing international mechanisms tended to be insufficient either because of their lack of effective impact on world macroeconomic variables or because of their inability to address imbalances affecting a significant part of the world economy. Much could still done to further policy coordination among them in order to provide the world community with clearer and more coherent goals. It was critical to address the issue of governance at the international level in order to erect a system which, on the basis of the interests of all parties, could lead to an equitable sharing of burdens and benefits.

The priority thematic areas which should be covered in an agenda for development were: promoting trade liberalization as a powerful engine for growth and development, supporting economic regionalism as building-blocks towards a more dynamic world economy, establishing an economic multilateralism which fully took into account the interests of all partners, enhancing international financial flows towards developing countries and recognizing the role of technology as a vital component in development.

Mr. ZARIF (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the agenda for development should contain more specific proposals on international trade, financial resources, transfer of technology and scientific cooperation. While national conditions were crucial to development, the agenda should also

(Mr. Zarif, Observer, Islamic Republic of Iran)

focus on essential external conditions. In addition it must highlight effective follow-up mechanisms and explore ways and means of promoting participation by developing countries on an equal footing in negotiations concerning crucial international fiscal and trade policies. The United Nations, because of its universality, relative transparency and democratic nature, was the most appropriate forum for economic policy coordination, provided that the Bretton Woods institutions were involved. In his view, the Economic and Social Council was the most appropriate body for policy coordination and follow-up; however it must be strengthened.

Mr. Botez (Romania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka) said that the most urgent task was to attack absolute poverty and to mobilize the resources necessary for that purpose. Accordingly, he commended the proposal made at the eleventh ministerial meeting of the non-aligned countries in Cairo to convene an international conference on the financing of development. In that connection, particular attention must be paid to the least developed countries which were racked by problems of negative economic growth, high rates of infant mortality and had private sectors which were too weak to play a key role.

While international cooperation and assistance were critical to achieve people-centred development, development should come from within and the priorities should be set by the countries themselves. It was important for the world to realize that development in the South would benefit both the South and the North. Technological advances and the revolution in communications were shaping a new global moral awareness. That awareness must extend to political life, in which pluralism and dialogue must triumph over ethnic intolerance and confrontation, and be mirrored in the economic sphere in a genuine partnership based on respect for equity and justice, free trade and sustainable development.

Mr. ALBAR (Observer for Malaysia) said that in their search for a new beginning and a new spirit of partnership developed and developing countries must be prepared to abandon extreme positions and base their vision on the idea of the interdependence and equity of nations. A determined effort must be made to overcome antagonisms and prejudices which were the legacy of history, the cold war or perceived cultural contradictions.

(Mr. Albar, Observer, Malaysia)

As diversity and spontaneity were the mainsprings of national creativity, each country must make continuous efforts to involve all minorities in its social and economic progress. At the same time, economic growth must go hand in hand with equity in order for social progress and integration to flourish. Concern for the rights of the individual must be viewed within the broader context of the common good of the society as a whole. Sustainable development was impossible without continuous investment in physical and human capital from within and from outside the region. However, persistent attempts to introduce social and environmental clauses into the international trade regime would have a negative impact on economic growth and development in developing countries; not only were such clauses protectionist in intent but they would also put an unbearable social burden on developing countries.

The Council's discussion of development must cut across cultures and traditions. If the United Nations was to play a role at the current turning point in history, it must introduce reforms. How such reform was conducted and the role played by the Organization in the emerging world order were of critical importance to the evolution of international relations.

Mr. EGGERT (Observer for Finland) said that while the Secretary-General's description of the five interlinked dimensions of development was useful, the agenda should reflect the notion that sustainable development was not merely an environmental concern but that it involved sustainability in economic, social and environmental terms. The role of the United Nations among the various other development partners must be more clearly defined. It should be able to analyse the social effects of structural adjustment and to provide policy advice in the social sectors and technical assistance to Governments. In addition to its analytical function the United Nations had a deliberative and normative function. The deliberative function was important in building consensus and directing attention to a variety of issues. Its value had, however, been reduced by the introduction of a plethora of issues on the General Assembly's agenda. As a result, consensus-building now took place at summit-level meetings. The agenda must address that issue. It could also stimulate an in-depth discussion on the importance of official development assistance to least developed countries and of present modes of development

(Mr. Eggert, Observer, Finland)

cooperation. Finally, the agenda must recognize more clearly that development was a global issue and that special attention must be given to Africa.

Mr. Butler (Australia) resumed the Chair.

Mr. DERYCKE (Belgium), referring to concepts of sustainable human development, noted that clear-cut priorities must be established. It must first be recognized that individual countries had different levels of development and different needs. In that connection, peace was a crucial prerequisite to any sustainable development. Therefore, the transition from peace-keeping operations to economic development activities should be facilitated. Such operations must be accompanied by plans preferably at the regional level, for the "post-chaos" period. His country, which contributed considerably to United Nations efforts, also supported regional peace-keeping initiatives through the Organization of African Unity. The latter course needed to be explored further.

Furthermore, it must be recognized that within societies certain social groups needed special attention. Steps must be taken to curb the tragic waste of human resources. Much could be accomplished by the developing countries themselves particularly through balanced national budgets. A better division of labour in the field of development was needed; tasks must be defined at all levels. Efficiency should be the only criterion in that regard. The specific role of the United Nations and its various agencies and organizations must be re-examined and a realistic division of labour between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions based on mutual respect must be established. Those institutions must realize that dialogue was necessary. A relatively modest approach to the agenda for development, based on past experience, would be most effective. People-centred development models must be flexible in order to be adaptable to human needs. The process of preparing the agenda for development was political and success would be measured by the agenda's ultimate impact.

Mr. NARANJO (Costa Rica) said that the Secretary-General's proposals reflected the priorities of Central American countries. After describing efforts being carried out in the region with international support to bring about peace and stability, he noted that peace and freedom were not enough and that human rights encompassed more than the civil and political rights of people. The region was still facing challenges in the economic, social, ecological and cultural fields. Central America was therefore giving top

(Mr. Naranjo, Costa Rica)

priority to sustainable human development. Because of its astonishing biodiversity, Costa Rica had included ecological instruction in its school curricula and had enshrined the obligation to protect the environment in its constitution. His country intended to address its critical environmental problems and to implement innovative programmes based on popular participation and on the idea that production and conservation were two sides of the same coin. Those projects would go hand in hand with sound management of the economy and eradication of poverty. Regionally, a spirit of cooperation for sustainable development had been forged that took into account the specific conditions of each country. The region had begun talks with the United Nations Development Programme in order to secure financing for some priority projects. Central America, which had been a successful model for the settlement of conflicts through dialogue and reconciliation in the 1980s, hoped to become a successful pilot programme for sustainable development in the 1990s. It hoped that it could count on international support in that endeavour.

Mr. HOVE (Zimbabwe) said that in an increasingly interdependent world, disparities between the developed and the developing countries were becoming increasingly more glaring. Developing countries continued to have little control over the key determinants of international trade and the agenda must thus seek to redress those imbalances among the two groups of countries. It must put forward concrete proposals for poverty reduction and employment creation opportunities as well as for the role of women in development. External official development assistance had declined to less than half of the target established by the General Assembly in 1970. For sustainable development to take place, the efforts of developing countries had to be supported by a favourable economic climate. His country hoped that with the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral negotiations, a more equitable and non-discriminatory trading system would be established. The international community also needed to adopt a unified coordinated approach to the debt problem of developing countries. In that connection, he pleaded for the cancellation of at least two thirds of the debt, under the Trinidad Terms of low-income developing countries, particularly in Africa. Particular attention also needed to be paid to the critical economic situation in Africa.

The United Nations must enhance its role in promoting international cooperation for development. Any new vision of development should be firmly

(Mr. Hove, Zimbabwe)

founded upon agreed objectives and commitments. In that connection, the agenda for development must ensure greater supervision of the Bretton Woods institutions. It should not seek to rewrite the consensus achieved under international agreements.

Mr. SAMUELSSON (Observer for Sweden) said that it was time to rethink the institutional framework for international economic and social cooperation and the role of the United Nations in that regard, not least in the operational field. An agenda for development - a timely contribution to that process - should focus on what the United Nations should be doing, rather on how it should carry out its work.

The concept of development should be discussed not only from a developing country perspective, but also as a global issue, focusing on the interdependence which characterized the contemporary world. He welcomed the fact that the Secretary-General had underscored that point in his introduction at the preceding meeting. Furthermore, the interrelationship of democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as a basis for truly sustainable human development required further elaboration. In addition, the interrelationship between population imbalances, poverty alleviation and environmental constraints must be borne in mind in any analysis of the concept of development.

His delegation welcomed the distinction made in the report between the three different functions of the United Nations, an analysis substantially in line with that contained in the Nordic United Nations project, which had identified the meeting place function, the normative function and the operational function. The distinction was important since the role of the United Nations differed significantly in regard to each of them. While his delegation welcomed the analysis of the first two functions, it felt that the operational role of the United Nations system in the economic field should be developed further. The United Nations was in a unique position to undertake operational activities in support of national development efforts, not least with regard to the maintenance of peace and security, social equity and the process of fostering democracy and public participation. It was important to define what the United Nations should do, given the limited resources at its disposal, to enhance the quality and impact of operational activities for development and ensure a stable and secure resource base.

(Mr. Samuelsson, Observer, Sweden)

The Secretary-General should include in his subsequent analysis of the topic other international institutions in the development field, including the Bretton Woods institutions. His delegation would welcome ideas on their roles and on the division of labour among them, and more concrete proposals as to what the United Nations itself should be doing, to ensure that each organization focused on what it did best.

Mr. MAJID (Bangladesh) said that the Secretary-General's report on an agenda for development rightly emphasized the ideals of democracy, good governance, human rights and social justice, all prerequisites for the enhancement of human capability and choice and for sustainable development. The international community should commit itself to ensuring that the developed countries honoured their pledge to increase the net flow of official, multilateral and bilateral resources to the developing countries, particularly the least developed economies; reducing the debt burden of the developing countries; in particular, the least developed countries; improving the access of developing countries to the markets of developed economies unhindered by non-tariff, quasi-tariff and hidden protectionist measures based on value judgements on social and human rights issues; facilitating the developing countries' access to environmentally sound technologies on concessional and favourable terms; and facilitating the transfer of technology to the developing countries and its adaptation to their needs.

Most of the least developed countries had implemented wide-ranging reforms under structural adjustment programmes. The international community must fulfil its commitment to reach established official development assistance targets, and the debt burden of those countries should be reduced and, wherever possible, eliminated. Expeditious implementation of the special differential measures included in the Final Act of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations would boost the developing countries' development prospects.

The United Nations should play an enhanced role in the post-cold war era in formulating global economic policies on a transparent, equitable and participatory basis, all the while upholding the principles enunciated in the Charter. It also had an enhanced role to play in consensus-building, particularly with respect to trade, finance, aid, environment, technology, human resources development and the progress of the least developed countries.

(Mr. Majid, Bangladesh)

In order to ensure that the agenda for development adequately dealt with the operational activities of the United Nations, it should be translated into a concrete plan of action reflecting the diversity of conditions in Member countries and a balance between national and international responsibilities and commitments.

Mr. HENIGSBERG (Observer for Croatia) said that his country strongly favoured the achievement of a balance between social and economic development through balanced economic growth based on equality, the right to development, social development, environmental protection and human development. The World Summit for Social Development would play an important role in promoting those values. Efforts to achieve that balance were of particular significance for countries like his own which were undergoing a transformation to a market economy.

The transformation process and the development of entrepreneurship carried a danger of social stratification, with potentially very negative social consequences. The goal should be to enable equality of opportunity for every individual, regardless of nationality, race or gender. The Governments of the countries in transition had a major role to play in achieving that objective and must formulate clear social programmes and adopt corrective measures to reduce the social costs of transformation, while avoiding playing a dominant role in the economy and in social development in general.

The severe devastation wrought in his country by Serbian military aggression compounded the difficulties of the transformation process. Underscoring the plight of displaced persons in his country, he warned that such persons might become a marginalized group unless the international community took steps to look after their needs along with those of refugees. The danger was all the more real as it was becoming increasingly clear that the international community could not find a solution to the armed conflict in that part of the world.

His country's main social programme focused on the return of displaced persons and refugees to their homes. Aid to his country must address not only the repair of infrastructure and humanitarian activities, but also the need to build a foundation for its future economic and social development. Specific action should be taken to transform humanitarian relief into longer-term development programmes, an approach whose validity had been acknowledged by the

(Mr. Henigsberg, Observer, Croatia)

international community in General Assembly resolution 48/204. Lastly, he said that the involvement of his Government in identifying needs, implementing programmes and coordinating the distribution of aid was a precondition for more effective international assistance.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.